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Viewing cable 07STATE35309, ENGAGING EU COMMISSIONER FOR ENLARGEMENT OLLI

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07STATE35309	2007-03-20 21:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Secretary of State

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 STATE 035309

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2017

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SUBJECT: ENGAGING EU COMMISSIONER FOR ENLARGEMENT OLLI
REHN IN HELSINKI

REF: HELSINKI 70

¶1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 3.

¶2. (C) EUR/ERA appreciates Embassy Helsinki,s initiative in reaching out to EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn as reported in Helsinki 70, and encourages future meetings whenever Rehn visits Helsinki. EU Commissioners can provide valuable insights into issues of deep interest to the Bureau and the Department. This cable provides guidance on key issues in Rehn,s EU Enlargement portfolio.

¶3. (C) Action Request: The Department requests that Embassy Helsinki schedule a meeting with Olli Rehn on his next visit to Helsinki to discuss issues relating to EU enlargement. Post may refer to the following guidance in engaging Rehn on next possible occasion:

BACKGROUND

TURKEY/CYPRUS

¶4. (SBU) The Finnish EU Presidency brokered a compromise over Turkey,s non-compliance with the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement that helped keep Turkey,s EU accession process alive. But the affair has drastically narrowed the scope for progress in the negotiations and soured an already poisonous atmosphere surrounding those talks. Under the pressure of national elections, nationalism is on the rise in Turkey. Turkey insists that only when the EU lives up to commitments made prior to Cyprus, accession to lift the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots) notably through implementation of aid and trade regulations) will it allow Greek Cypriot vessels access to Turkish ports as it is required to do for ships of all EU members.

¶5. (SBU) The EU approved ,259 million in aid to the Turkish Cypriot community in fall 2006. Implementation of funded projects has met with both practical and political obstacles; it remains to be seen whether all available funds can be contracted by the 2009 deadline. Although the January 22-23 EU Council called for work to resume on the Commission,s direct trade regulation for the Turkish Cypriots, it is unclear if the German EU Presidency will be able or willing to outmaneuver the Greek Cypriots. Movement on trade and aid could have beneficial spillover effects for a permanent Cyprus settlement process under UN auspices, which will almost certainly have to precede Turkey,s entry into the EU.

WESTERN BALKANS

¶6. (SBU) With the opportunity to resolve Kosovo,s status this year, the international community is well positioned to assist the Western Balkans move beyond the conflict of the 1990s and firmly on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration. We need to focus on our objectives of regional stability and economic prosperity for all the countries of southeast Europe and of the region as a whole. At Thessaloniki in 2003, the EU Council declared that the Balkans, future was within Europe, but countries in the region have no clear sense of what that means. 2006 was essentially a lost year for EU enlargement in the Western Balkans; only Croatia got & closer to Europe,8 by completing several chapters of the acquis communautaire.

¶7. (C) Elsewhere in the Western Balkans, EU discussions on integration have offered little reason for optimism. With full membership seemingly a distant prospect, successive EU presidencies have focused on a consolation prize) travel liberalization) but that too has proven elusive. The current modest objective of visa facilitation is largely confined to containing planned increases in visa fees. Such damage limitation does little to make travel easier; on the contrary, the Western Balkans now face visa requirements for

travel to new EU members Bulgaria and Romania.

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¶8. (SBU) The last significant obstacle for Bosnia to conclude a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU stems from its failure to meet the EU criteria on police reform. The U.S. supports EU pressure on Bosnia to create more integrated, professional nationwide police structures. However, the EU,s leverage on overall reforms will only increase once Bosnia is in the Stabilization and Association process. We will continue to support EU and Office of the High Representative (OHR) efforts to forge a Bosnian agreement that meets the EU,s police reform criteria, but encourage the EU to demonstrate flexibility on what it deems to meet these criteria.

¶9. (SBU) We support further EU-Serbian integration, particularly in relation to a Kosovo decision. Constructive integration entails engaging Serbia on war crimes issues. SAA negotiations were suspended and membership in Partnership for Peace (PfP) was denied due to Serbia,s non-cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), namely, the failure to arrest and transfer to The Hague fugitive Ratko Mladic. In December, NATO granted PfP membership to Serbia; the EU should consider the impact that restarting SAA talks would have on a Kosovo decision as well as ensuring that Serbia is mindful of its obligation to cooperate with the ICTY.

¶10. (SBU) Stability in Balkan countries is highly dependent on their prospects for integration with Europe. We are not asking for shortcuts to integration) only for clear indications that the Western Balkan countries will enter the EU eventually, and that the timing depends on the pace of their reforms. The EU needs to move beyond the current standstill: it should provide a starting date for accession talks with Macedonia; issue clear and realizable goals for Bosnian police reform; and find a way to overcome the impasse over SAA negotiations with the new Serbian government.

Policy Background Information

¶11. (SBU) The U.S. supports the EU enlargement process as a means to promote peace, stability and reform in aspirant countries and the region as a whole. Key U.S. policy points are as follows:

REHN,S LEADERSHIP

-- We are preaching to the converted when we talk to you about the importance of building on the EU,s greatest achievement: extending the zone of peace, liberty and welfare across the European continent.

-- You have been an articulate champion of the need for further enlargement, for the good of existing members as well as future ones.

-- We welcomed your February 26 speech in Berlin and its emphasis on the EU membership perspective as the greatest transformative force in Europe.

-- As you indicated in the speech, the dynamic economic growth resulting from enlargement is also the greatest assurance that Europe will be a force to be reckoned with throughout the 21st century.

-- How can the U.S. help overcome some EU countries, nervousness about further enlargement?

TURKEY/CYPRUS

-- Although the Finnish Presidency-brokered compromise over

Turkey,s non-compliance with the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement helped keep Turkey,s EU accession process on track, the EU should take special care in the current political environment that it sends positive signals to Turkey regarding its EU accession prospects.

-- It is important that EU live up to its obligations to lift the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community. The October agreement to disburse ,38.1 million of ,259 million in aid was a good start, but the EU must now face down Greek Cypriot opposition to implement the 24 projects that are already funded, such as university scholarships, and accelerate the disbursement process for the remainder to avoid losing credibility and momentum.

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-- Most importantly, the EU should take rapid steps to approve the Direct Trade Regulation for the Turkish Cypriot community. This regulation must not contain conditions, such as a return of Varosha, that pre-judge a permanent settlement on Cyprus.

-- The United States, overarching objective in Cyprus is to help foster a comprehensive settlement that reunifies the island into a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. We actively support the efforts of the United Nations to reconcile differences and find common ground for a settlement. The EU can play a positive role by making progress on aid and trade to the Turkish Cypriot community; doing so will have positive effects on a permanent settlement.

WESTERN BALKANS

Back to a Regional Focus on Integration

-- The EU integration process is the most important factor for stabilizing the Balkans. Back-sliding, refugee flows, emigration, and violence remain real possibilities if EU does not decisively move toward integration. Security missions are a band-aid, not a cure.

-- Technical debates about elements of a Kosovo status settlement have overwhelmed planning for the prosperity and stability of the region as a whole. We should get back to a focus on regional stabilization, and Euro-Atlantic integration as the prime catalyst.

-- The institutional changes encouraged by the integration process can lay the foundation for increased investment and job creation. They also provide structures for modern administration and regional cooperation needed to combat organized crime.

-- Nationalism and criminality disguised as nationalism have been root causes of instability in the region. Through integration, nationalism can be curtailed substantially by improving economic conditions and, to a lesser extent by rendering borders less important.

A Need for Clarity, and Momentum

-- 2006 was largely a lost year for bolstering EU enlargement hopes in the Western Balkans, except in Croatia, which successfully concluded some chapters in accession negotiations.

-- EU policy on enlargement vis--vis the Balkans needs to be made clear and made clear soon.

Serbia

-- EU talks with Serbia on a SAA have been suspended for a year, making membership prospects more distant at a critical time in the region.

-- NATO granted Serbia PfP membership. Similarly, the EU

should look for an opportunity to resume SAA negotiations with Serbia, within a timeframe conducive to a Kosovo settlement, while ensuring that Serbia cooperates with the ICTY.

-- Your previous public statements on SAA for Serbia have been particularly constructive. We support further statements clarifying the EU,s engagement strategy with Serbia, such as through the SAA process.

Bosnia

-- Achieving an SAA will be a landmark achievement for Bosnia and should help drive additional reforms. We will continue to support EU and OHR efforts to forge an agreement among Bosnians that meets the EU criteria on police reform.

-- In light of the SAA,s importance as an engine for achieving broader and more rapid economic and political reform, we encourage the EU to demonstrate maximum flexibility in determining whether Bosnia has met these criteria.

Macedonia

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-- Macedonia was granted candidate status in December 2005, but there is no starting date for accession talks and no plans for setting one.

-- Macedonia has made impressive economic reforms and is working to re-establish a productive government-opposition dialogue. The EU can and should plan to start accession talks.

Moving Forward

-- Without clarity that all of southeast Europe is moving toward Euro-Atlantic structures, nationalism, demagoguery, crime and their toxic progeny will continue to thrive in the region.

-- The U.S. is not asking for a short-cut to EU membership. But every country should have a sense that it is on track for EU (and NATO) membership, and the timing depends on each country's progress.

RICE